

RATE OF FIRE

The Newsletter of the Paddington Bears ASL Club



Issue 13

Summer 1999

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This newsletter is dedicated to the play of Advanced Squad Leader ?, and the players and news of the ASL community in Australia.

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I would also encourage players everywhere to take several copies to local game stores to be provided **Free of Charge** to any interested gamers.

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To make a submission, send your piece either by email or by mail me. I will return any item with comments I feel needs more work. Otherwise, I will refer the item to an independent proofreader and reviewer to check that the item is substantially correct and readable. It will then be included in the next appropriate issue.

There is no particular size limit for Rate of Fire, I will issue what I have. Given sufficient submissions, I may make an attempt to do Special interest issues, grouping submissions by subject.

From time to time I will request players to write articles for the newsletter. Please consider these as "my last editorial demand" to paraphrase a famous German leader

Mark McG (Editor)

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FOREWORD

Welcome to another issue of Rate of Fire, unlucky #13. Despite the rather forbidding Issue number, this has been the easiest issue for me to produce so far.

This issue focuses mainly on the Spanish Civil War, which I regard as an interesting forerunner of World War 2. It certainly seems to me that ASL can easily accommodate Spanish Civil War actions, and hopefully add a new flavour to those early war encounters, and to get some use out of those Italian, Chinese and Axis Minor counters, not to mention the early model German, Russian and Italian. I hope you enjoy the historical article, and the Spanish Civil War DYO scenario rules.

Also included in this issue is the second and final instalment of the Tank Rumble. Re-live again the fear and the triumph of the Rumble. I just wish I had plugged Gordon at the end!

Otherwise, there is the usual mixture of Tournament and Bear news.

Congratulations to several new father Bears of 1998, Kong Tang, Malcolm Cameron and Chris Hersey, and also congratulations to Richard Cornwell on his recent marriage.

We should also note the immortalisation of a few of our number. Cpl Probst in DOOMED BATTALIONS, and Untr von Linton and Schr. Byrne in WAFFEN SS: NO QUARTER NO GLORY.

Since the next ROF issue is due June 5th, 1999; so our next issue will be focusing on Pegasus Bridge, 55 years after the Oxs and Bucks boarded their gliders. I will be asking people to prepare various reviews of the module, the campaign and most of the scenarios. If you would like to participate, drop me a line.

**Mark McGilchrist
Editor**



ANZACON '98 Organiser's After-Action Report

*by Bruce Probst
Tournament Director*

Well, with a mixture of relief and sadness I can say that ANZACON '98 is over and done with. Twelve people rocked up to play this year, which was about what I expected, except that fully six of them came from outside Melbourne, which was much more than I had anticipated. Yes, that means the local turn-out was disappointing, but people were claiming "life" was getting in the way. (What is "life"? I don't understand.) Of the out-of-towners, four were Paddington Bears from Sydney, one was from Adelaide and one was from the US, via Korea (!). Of the locals, one was a brand-new face, braving the tournament "just because" - just what we like to see!

The weekend began with about nine of us turning up at Andrew Rogers' house on Friday for a multi-player free-for-all. Andrew had organised a scenario of Japanese vs. British forces played on the La Gleize map. I could only stay for part of the day so I don't know the full details of what happened ... I'm not even sure who could have been said to have "won" (not that that was really the point). All I know is my small British outpost force defending Peiper's HQ was quickly overwhelmed by David Bishop's Japanese, although I did manage to immobilise one Chi-Ha with a 51* MTR, and kill another with street-fighting. I did hear later that Mr Bishop managed to kill two British AFVs (a Grant and a Stuart) with a single Japanese leader in CC!!

To the tournament itself, which ran over the two days of the weekend, four rounds. Each round presented four scenarios for players to choose from.

I deliberately tried to select scenarios that were relatively obscure to try and present a "fresh

face" and put everyone on a relatively even starting position. I'm not sure how successful the end result was, but it seemed to go OK. The big problem is that we were under a fairly tough time problem, and in most of the rounds the scenarios couldn't be played to a "natural" conclusion, which I am *extremely* disappointed by and I unreservedly apologise to all the players. If I were to do this again I would definitely use chess clocks to help time play, although I think that even that would have only been a partial solution; it was just hard to fit four rounds into two days, which I guess was my fault for choosing scenarios that (as it turned out) were too complex for the available time. Oh well

First Prize for the tournament was a \$50 gift certificate from Napoleon's Military Bookshop, and a beautiful diorama trophy constructed by local player (and ANZACON '97 and CanCon '98 champion) Jamie Westlake.

Because attendance was good enough that a little bit of extra cash was available, there were also prizes (refunds of the entry fee, basically) for most CVP scored during the tournament and for most boxcars rolled.

The rounds were as follows:

ROUND 1: ANZAC Action

TAC44 Lebanese Drama (Tactiques #6) Lebanon, June 1941. British/Australian vs. Vichy French.
RP8 Victoria Cross (Rout Pak) Malaya, January 1942. Japanese vs. Australian.
D-B The Kiwis Attack (General Vol.29#6) Italy, March 1944. German vs. New Zealanders.
SP23 Assault On The Hotel Continental (Schwerpunkt #2) Italy, March 1944. German vs. New Zealanders.

So much for choice - 5 out of the 6 pairs of players choose "Victoria Cross" (the odd-one out being a game of "Assault on the Hotel Continental"). Ironically, many players chose "VC" because they thought it would play quickly, but in the end only one of the playings (and the "Assault" match) had "natural" conclusions.

ROUND 2: Italian Jobs

SP12 Piano Lupo (Schwerpunkt #1) Sicily, July 1943. Italian/German vs. American.
KE6 Rock Steady (March Madness '97) Sicily, August 1943. American vs.. German/Italian.
TAC55 Dangerous Crossroads (Tactiques #7) Tunisia, November 1942. Italian/German vs. British.
CH37 Forgotten Years (Critical Hit #3) Ethiopia, March 1936. Ethiopian vs. Italian.

This one was a little more diverse, with 3 out of 6 pairings opting for "Piano Lupo"; two others went for "Dangerous Crossroads" with the last opting for "Forgotten Years" (although that was mostly because of a severe shortage of copies of Board 9 - d'oh!).

ROUND 3: Made in Japan

SP1 Raiders At Regi (Schwerpunkt #1) New Georgia, June 1943. Japanese vs. American (Marines).
KE7 Tennis, Anyone? (March Madness '97) India, May 1944. Japanese vs. British.
TAC29 Kakazu Ridge (Tactiques #?) Okinawa, April 1945. Japanese vs. American.
WCW10 Stand And Die (Windy City Wargamers) China, December 1937. Chinese vs. Japanese.

Six out of six chose "Kakazu Ridge". I'm sure they all had good reasons, but I'm sitting there thinking "are the selections really that bad?" A bit unnerving for me as organiser, but ... <shrug>.

ROUND 4: Clash of Armour

KE5 Beyond The Pakfronts (March Madness '97) Russia, July 1943. Russian vs. German.
SP3 Duel At Reuler (Schwerpunkt #1) Luxembourg, December 1944. American vs. German.
Euro61 Elusive Armor (Euro-Pack III) Philippines, January 1945. American vs. Japanese.

CH58 Death Ride (Critical Hit Vol.3#1) Russia, July 1943. German vs.. Russian.

Four opt for "Duel At Reuler", with one "Death Ride" and a single "Beyond the Pakfronts". I believe that many players would have liked to go for "Pakfronts" but didn't believe it was possible to conclude it in the time available. Oh, well

The deciding match of the weekend was between local Dave Bardi and visitor from Adelaide Matt Brennan. They chose "Duel At Reuler" and actually were first to finish, in only a little over an hour; Dave's hot, hot Germans had polished off all the US armour without taking so much as a dent in their paintwork in return.

Indeed, the Germans won three of the four matches fairly handily, with the sole exception being the one between David Bishop and Steve Banham, which came down to the last dice roll - a CH polishing off a US tank crew and leader waiting to jump into CC with the last surviving German panzer - everything else had been eliminated!

The CVP prize went to Sydney player Gordon McClelland, whose total of 106 for the weekend far outstripped everyone else - and he got most of them in the last round, with his Germans doing very well against Dave Longworth's Russians in "Death Ride". The "Colonel Boxcars" award went to Paul Haseler, whose impressive effort of 17 was appreciated by all of his opponents.

I'd like to finish this report with two notable quotes overheard during play: the first from Matt Brennan, who, after his Japanese fired at an Australian squad in "Victoria Cross" causing them to go Fanatic, dryly muttered "ah - exactly the result I was hoping for". The second from Jamie Westlake, who I think summed it all up for all of us - I don't know the scenario or the situation, but the comment was true for any: "Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck."

Many thanks to all who attended, and I hope you had fun! Next year's ANZACon will be organised by Jamie Westlake - venue will be the same, the scenarios will be all originals designed by Jamie, and you'll need a lot of space on your shelf if you want to win the trophy - he's building a Panther! Further details will be published when we have some idea! Be there!

INTENSIVE FIRE '98
Long Lost Bearcub makes good
by Iain McKay

Intensive Fire is the UK's major ASL event (people in Preston & Blackpool may disagree) and this year it happened from the 23rd to the 26th October, 1998 at the Kiwi hotel in Bournemouth.

This is an Australian view of the event- albeit an Australian who has been in the UK for 9 years.

For me the event starts as an extra night on call so I can leave early and cover the 220 miles avoiding the worst traffic of the year. Thankfully the cows are healthy and I'm not too busy. Just to set the tone, the weather is poor, Wales floods (again) and a four hour journey takes a happy six hours.

Eventually with a headache from hell the hotel appears in front of me, and I scramble in.

Gaming is well underway, many people arrived on the Thursday, visited the Tank museum at Bovington (well worth a visit if you ever invade Pommie-land) and have a few games under their belts. Points of note; the new Doomed Battalions scenarios are being played, everyone making comments about the canal appearance of the roads on board 45! Also Ian Daglish' latest efforts are being tested and perfected. That guy pushes scenarios out at quite a rate,

and they are bloody good in my experience! MMP have a few scenarios out and Shaun Carters' errata for Pegasus bridge get an airing, Shermans having replaced the Churchills in the module.

I volunteered to break into my DB set and play Round One v Roger Cook where Rogers Germans swarm around Warsaw and 5 hidden polish AT and ART guns have a ball toasting them. Bad luck and tiredness for Roger meant he walked right up to the guns and thus the scenario ended prematurely just before midnight.

A tradition for myself and Pete Phillips (View From The Trenches editor) involves very poor ASL play using alcohol and post midnight starts at any convention we both attend. In The Old Tradition (MMP3- early war Japs v British colonial troops) involved both of us plucking defeat from the jaws of victory until Pete ran out of units. Quite an early night for both of us, bed at 3 am. Disappointingly only one game went on late, everyone must have been tired from a hard days dicing.

On the Saturday and Sunday, Intensive Fire features a team competition, with 20 teams of 3 players competing for points based on performance and scenario complexity. Trevor Edwards and Steve Thomas from Preston had reluctantly allowed me to join their team, and we were in the lower half of the draw (based on ratings- this shows my level of skill). As the tournament started, we were promoted and sat quaking in our boots, waiting to be blown away. I thought Trev and Steve are okay so we'll not be disgraced, but the Danes had a strong team, Patrick Manlig from Sweden was there, and a number of skilled and quick Americans, so what hope did I have !

I started playing Scouts Out versus Justin Key from Portsmouth. Dice contributed to a very aggressive and lucky attack, and I was surprised to notch a win v. a better player. Team score 3-0, so far so good. A lot of people played Soft Noodle (PB12) and the Chinese tended to win. All in all the play was quicker than many UK

tournaments, so things went fairly smoothly. Late finishes were penalised- this was to become crucial.

My dice repaid me for the mornings luck when Dominic McGrath outplayed me completely in Will To Fight..... Eradicated. Team doing well on 5 out of 6, I was in disgrace. Out for a Mexican (plan was a curry!) as a UN force, Denmark, USA (Brian Martuzas), Poland, Scotland, Australia, and two from England relaxed and recovered from the aggravation of cardboard heroics. A late return followed by friendly games and whisky or Bundy Black which had mysteriously found its way there ended quite late. My team mates were worried, as we were playing off against the top team and I didn't seem to want to sleep. My opponent was to be Pete Phillips and we seemed to have an built-in balance mechanism, except he's younger than me and his hangover was not noticeable.

The morning arrived, Pete 30 mins late, as expected! We were quite nervous about other people depending on us to win a tournament. We played "The Waterhole" from the Nhpum Ga selection in the Annual and it was excellent. (it also carried extra points!) Quite a dicey scenario as small ones can be, my Japs wandered about and into the victory hex, having eliminated or broken so many of Petes' marauders that he was short of MMC's for the close combat and couldn't regain control. At this

stage, we had won 2 of 3 against a good team, and Trevor was battling manfully against a throat infection and Patrick Manlig from Sweden. Dice played there part and a set DC blew away the invaders and Trev regained his water hole. At this stage Trev new we had to rely on one of the Danes to lose and we'd win by ? of a point (Derek Tocher penalised for a late game early on).

I found a fellow Australian Rupert Featherby- an archaeologist, though I'm not sure where he's working currently and tried to savour the moment, with a few turns of Shanghai in Flames which was never finished.

Not much later, I was a proud owner of a engraved Quaich- a pewter whisky drinking vessel from Scotland, and totally stunned, my team had managed 8 wins for 9 scenarios.

The overall winner (individual) for the tournament was Simon Strevens from Portsmouth, and as I have stated, the winning fireteam was Steve Thomas, Trevor Edwards and myself.

(Steve and Trev run the Berserk Tournament in Blackpool each year)

*Iain McKay
mad Vet or Aussie ASLer in exile.*

The Spanish Civil War — A Social and Cultural Perspective by Peter Raftos

A British Communist asked a journalist who had recently returned from visiting the Republican and Nationalist territories what the difference between the two sides was. The journalist replied, "None." Unsatisfied, the Communist asked for more. Finally the journalist said, the Franco salute was an open hand while the Republican salute a closed fist. (Jackson 1994:119-120)

Both an echo of World War I and a precursor to the mechanised warfare of World War II, the Spanish Civil War was fought at numerous levels, at once an affair of internal Spanish politics and an international war by proxy. Within Spain, forces were polarised between social change and conservatism, Catholicism and anti-clericalism, and regional desires for autonomy against centuries of centrist government from Madrid. At the same time, the civil war reflected the growing international tension between communism and fascism, and the foreign policy objectives of half of Europe. As such, it was as much a war of propaganda, both in Spain and elsewhere, as it was a struggle between two armed camps.

This article will examine each of the main groups who participated in the war, either as combatants or supporters.

On July 17, 1936, a group of army officers, led by Generals Sanjurjo, Mola and Francisco Franco initiated a long-planned military coup against the Republican government of Casares Quiroga, partly in response to what many officers saw as dangerous attempts to reform the Spanish polity. The Republican government of the day had attempted, albeit half-heartedly, to undertake a number of long-overdue reforms, including land reform, the granting of partial autonomy to the Basques and Catalonians, and clipping the wings of the Catholic Church. Like the church, the army was largely a bastion of conservatism, an attitude sharpened by the loss of the last of Spain's empire in 1898 and the severe bloody nose it had received from the Moroccans in the first 20 years of this century.

The uprising was to take place simultaneously in the army barracks across Spain; however, not all went to plan – the coup very nearly failed – and a number of senior officers and garrison commanders remained loyal to the government. In other areas, the troops rose up, but were defeated and killed or captured by workers' militias or the paramilitary police forces. Within a day, it became clear the insurgents (later to become known as the Nationalists) controlled roughly a third of peninsular Spain, excluding Madrid and the vital industrial areas of Catalonia and the Basque region.

Although the coup had got off to a rocky start, the elite Moroccan Army of Africa and the Morocco-based Spanish Foreign Legion, as expected, followed Franco, easily overwhelming those garrisons in North Africa which had remained loyal to the Republican government. At this time the Spanish regular army was a model of inefficiency, corruption and waste. Led by a bloated corps of officers (whose pay was so low that junior officers could not support a family without selling equipment and supplies on the sly), the army had a paper strength of approximately 100,000 men, of which 30,000 formed the Spanish Legion and Moroccan *regulares*, while an estimated 50,000 of the remainder (the Peninsular Army) were actual soldiers (the others existed only on the rolls so officers could draw their pay and rations). Leadership in the Peninsular Army was generally abysmal, training non-existent (many soldiers had never fired a rifle when the war began) and equipment rotten: the Spanish used the term "military issue" to describe anything of the worst

possible quality. Approximately half of the Peninsular Army remained loyal to the Republic, although estimates vary.

While the Peninsular Army was barely a cohesive fighting force, the Spanish Foreign Legion (modelled on the French legion, but consisting largely of Spaniards) and the Muslim *regulares* of the Army of Africa were Spain's elite troops, well-trained and with combat experience in North Africa. The *regulares* also had a fearsome reputation for knife fighting and both formations were known for torture, rape and summary executions, a reputation they had lived up to while quelling a worker's rebellion in Asturias in 1934.

Although Franco controlled Spain's best troops, he was unable to transport them to mainland Spain because he had no ships: the navy's sailors had remained with the Republic, executing or imprisoning those officers who attempted to bring their ships into the Nationalist fold (in addition, about half of the army's pilots stayed loyal to the Republic). He appealed to Germany and Italy who, after some hesitation, supplied him with transport planes and fighters.

Apart from the army and navy, there were a number of paramilitary police organisations in Spain: the Civil Guards, the Assault Guards, and the Border Police. The Civil Guards were among the most hated symbols of authority in Spain, deliberately quartered in regions well away from their homes, and required to keep aloof from the local populace. Their official role was to keep the peace, but in practice this usually meant shooting hungry, unarmed peasants when the latter attempted to seize untilled land (which occurred in Spain regularly). The Assault Guards were the urban equivalent, and seem to have a much less unsavoury reputation. While the Border Police generally remained loyal to the Republic, the other paramilitary organisations largely appear to have joined the Nationalists. This was always the case; however, the Civil Guards' loyalty to the Republic was generally equivocal at best, and it was not unknown for small groups of Civil Guards units to cross over if the opportunity arose.

There were a number of political organisations of varying stripes which threw their weight behind the Nationalists. These included the Catholic Church, which, with the exception of most of the Basque clergy and a few priests elsewhere, was officially opposed to the Republican government since it had curtailed many of the Church's privileges and included godless Bolsheviks.

Where the Church went, the Carlists followed. Fiercely Catholic and traditionalist, the Carlists took their name from Don Carlos, whose claim to the Spanish throne had plunged Spain into civil war in the early 19th Century. Although the Carlist line had been extinguished by the middle of last century, the party still existed as a viable political force, and raised large numbers of committed fighters for the Nationalist cause. Carlists insisted on fighting in their own formations, with their own insignia.

Two other groups to join Franco were the CEDA, a right-wing party which was largely a spent force by the start of the war, and the Falange. The CEDA favoured a corporatist Catholic state, similar to Dolfuss' Austrian model, while the Falangists were far more avidly fascist along Italian lines. While Falangist troops did see action, they were more active in the rear areas, hunting down suspected Republican sympathisers. All the various right-wing and traditionalist groups were amalgamated into one party, the *Falange Espanola Tradicionalista y de las JONS* (The Traditionalist Spanish Falange and the National Syndicalist Offensive Juntas) by Franco in April 1937, thus ensuring his supreme control of the Nationalist side. While Franco certainly used these groups to further his own ends, he was never an outright fascist, and the coup itself was more a military takeover than anything else (military takeovers have a long history in Spain).

Although there were army and guards units which remained loyal to the Republic, its main strength lay in the hastily-constituted workers' militias which represented a bewildering variety of politically-active trade unions, including the CNT and FAI (both anarchists), the UGT (socialists), POUM (anti-Stalinist communists) and the PCE (Stalinist communists). Apart from the PCE, these groups eschewed rigid military organisation in favour of democratic structures. All were largely badly-trained, badly-led and inadequately equipped: although much more adept at street fighting than the majority of their opponents, they were initially no match for the Moroccans and Legionnaires in the fighting in the open countryside west and south of Madrid which took place in the first six months of the war, tending to bunch up under fire and having no concept of orderly retreat or entrenching.

Of all the political parties which formed militias, the PCE were the most successful, gradually infiltrating the Republic state apparatus until they controlled supply, the appointment of commissars (found throughout the Republican forces), the active secret police organisations and most officers. They were assisted in this by Stalin himself: apart from some aid in the form of rifles, ammunition and money from Mexico, virtually all material assistance to the Republic came from the Soviet Union and was channelled through the Spanish communist party. When the militias were reorganised as the regular Popular Army from the winter of 1936 on, it was the PCE who took control (and proceeded to purge the POUM, whom they labelled "Trotskyist" and, later, "Fascist"). The PCE were to remain in effective control until almost the end of the war.

Although staunchly Catholic, and in many ways traditionalist, the Basques remained loyal to the Republic. In large part, this was because of the favourable stance towards Basque autonomy taken by that government: previous military dictatorships had progressively removed many long-held rights enjoyed by the Basque regions. The pro-Republican position of the Catholic Basques was a prickly subject for the Church, which officially supported Franco.

Although the Spanish Civil War can be seen as an affair of internal national politics, it quickly drew the attention and, occasionally, support of foreign individuals and states. Foremost among these are the International Brigades. Very few of the Brigadiers were intellectuals, writers or poets. Rather, it seems that many of those who went to Spain were militant workers wanting to fight fascism, or displaced persons from Germany, Italy, Greece and Hungary. There were also adventurers and mercenaries, although these generally ended up in the air force. Additionally, about half the battalions in each International Brigade were actually Spanish, while many foreigners actually served in regular Spanish units (Orwell was in the POUM militia, Malraux helped organise the air force before the brigades existed, and Hemingway wasn't a combatant). Few had had any military training, and survivors wrote of learning to fire their rifles in the middle of battle. Communist-recruited and led, they were used both as shock troops on the field and for propaganda purposes internationally. While estimates vary, the number of Brigadiers probably never exceeded 30,000 at any one time. Although their military effectiveness has probably been over-rated, they were occasionally instrumental: the Germans probably saved Madrid and the Italians at Guadalajara. At the time of those battles, both these units had a large proportion of World War I veterans in their ranks, a rarity for either Brigade or regular Spanish units.

Apart from material, Soviet aid was largely confined to the provision of technical teams to train Spanish tank and air crews, and military "advisers", whose insistence on hyper-orthodox tactics led to some of the Republic's biggest defeats. Artillery, armour, air support and even ammunition and rations were often only available to communist-dominated units, or those units in which officers were willing to join the Party. Stalin was less interested in a Republican victory than in obtaining an anti-German alliance with Britain and France.

On the Nationalist side, the greatest flow of military assistance came from Italy, which supplied four divisions as the CTV, or Italian Corps of Volunteers Troops. Three of these divisions were composed in reality of conscripts and shanghaied civilians.

The CTV was badly defeated at Guadalajara, where they faced a mixed force of Spaniards and Italians from the Garibaldi Brigade. Their equipment and training appears to have been as inadequate as their Spanish and Brigade counterparts' (prior to leaving Italy, they had been told they were going to Abyssinia, and had been issued with tropical gear). Additional support for the Nationalists was also forthcoming from the Portuguese who, in addition to allowing their territory as a conduit for supplies, provided a number of troops. It is unclear whether these were regulars or volunteers, similar to the International Brigadiers. Small numbers of foreigners joined the Nationalist side from across the world, including a few hundred Irish and, apparently, one Australian (there were perhaps as many as 50 on the Republican side). In general, the Republicans were supported by individuals, while the Nationalists enjoyed the tacit or active support of most European governments.

Unlike Mussolini, who supported Franco as a means to achieving military glory for his legions, Hitler used the war as a testing-ground for new equipment and blitzkrieg tactics. It was in Spain the Stukas, various models of Messerschmitt and PzKpw Is were first tried out. It was also here that the dreaded "88"'s potent armour-piercing capabilities were first noted. The Condor Legion was relatively small, consisting largely of trainers and specialists, such as tank, aircraft and flak crews. For their aid to Franco, Germany and Italy were richly rewarded, obtaining valuable mining, trading and territorial concessions.

In conclusion, it can be said that both the Nationalist and Republican sides were composed of an array of different groups, each with own agendas – and often opposed to those of their allies. While the differences in the Nationalist camp were held in check and eventually dissolved by Franco, for the Republicans, these differences caused as many problems as the inexperience and poor equipment of their troops, the inflexibility of their tactical doctrines, or international collusion with Franco. By the end of the war, the Republicans had fought a number of civil wars within their own territory, and the execution of those who were supposedly allies but held different political convictions continued unabated. This contributed to the reign of terror conducted by both sides as Republicans and Nationalists both sought out enemy sympathisers. However, the practice of summary execution was far more widespread among the Nationalists. Estimates vary, but the number killed behind the lines may be ten times the number killed on both sides in battle. It was a bitter, political war.

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ASL and the Spanish Civil War

TANKS FOR DE MEMORIES

by Paul Haseler

Readers will be glad to note that this is the conclusion to the Grecian Rumble AAR published in Rate Of Fire, the Paddington Bears newsletter,(and also on our webpage). Eight British and eight German players had entered the fray on each side (and after 4 Turns, both sides had suffered 50% casualties).

One German player (Leutnant Ladderman in his PzIIIG - Dave Wilson) with three solo kills made the step up to an 8-1 A/L. Unfortunately this was just a few moments before he was fried (by the scruffy Corporal Fouler in an A13 - Gordon McClelland), so his promotion was actually worth CVP to the British side in the end. Lots of other opportunities for death or glory await the remaining Rumlbers.

Rumbling into the Valley *Part 2*

It is April 1941, in the Greek hills..... many plumes of smoke are rising from one section of the battlefield which the GM calls ' *the Valley of Death*'.

British Team - Turn 5-7

| AFV | Callsign | Player |
|----------|--------------|---------------------|
| MkVIB | Cpl Cameron | Malcolm Cameron |
| A10MkIa | SSM Snakeyes | Paul Seage (TL) |
| A13 MkII | Cpl Fouler | Gordon McClelland |
| A10 MkIa | Cpl Imax | Mark Bretherton (R) |

German Team - Turn 5-7

| AFV | Callsign | Player |
|--------|------------------|-----------------------|
| PzIIF | Fwbl Drac | Earl Schultz |
| Pz38tE | Gftr von Boxcars | David Bishop |
| PzIIIF | Gftr Kranklich | Simon Tout |
| PzIIIG | Lt Sturm | Mark McGilchrist (TL) |

TURN 5 *Chaos and Confusion*

BRITISH: Where the hell is that PzIII? Legendary tank-meister Snakeyes speeds into action, only to instantly depart in a puff of smoke, (speeding doesn't pay - when it stops you spotting an enemy ambush). Cpl Imax unexpectedly arrives from HQ and tries to do his bit. Cpl Cameron lurks in dark corners (but what more can you expect of a tin-plated British light tank). In a flash of inspiration, the Germans promote young Sturm to Leutnant and Team Leader (so the bottom of the barrel is closer than they thought).

GERMAN: Kranklich backs his PzIII into 10Q9 aiming for bonus (Breakthrough) CVP, while being missed by AP shots from Imax on the way. The wily Gefreiter von Boxcars finally pokes his nose on to Board 10 (in search of easy pickings). Sturm und Drac are still a long way behind him. The leaderless Brits have no choice but to make filthy Fouler the new TL (tsk tsk, the regiment wouldn't have tolerated this in peacetime).

TURN 6 *Last Roll Of The Dice*

BRITISH: Sgt Fouler demands action from the remnants of the Empire's finest. The dutiful Cpl Cameron does recon-by-death, pushing his luck too far finding the PzIII (and becomes the only Crew Survivor also).

That victory elevates Kranklich to 8-1 A/L status (instant Iron Cross). The flashy Cpl Imax rumbles round the right flank, and misses the lucky PzIII again (but Kranklich has intensive fired). Fouler 'bravely' goes straight down the road, and blasts another brand new German A/L (hmmmm, those extra CVP).

GERMAN: Not aware of the lonely fate of Kranklich, von Boxcars pokes further on to Board 10, and even dares to face Imax one on one.

Sturm und Drac are still sorting out map references and are not there yet (except in spirit).

TURN 7 *The Beginning Of The End*

BRITISH: Cpl Imax gacks his Prep Fire chances, and his fate is sealed (the doomed A10 crew hold a prayer meeting while waiting for the end).

Von Boxcars hand-selects a specially polished APCR round....lines up the 37L sights....and it is all over for Cpl Imax. Fouler oozes into 10Q6 and determines to stay hull-down there until Hell Freezes Over.

Fouler is now an orphan, seeing his boys get perforated or fried.

GERMAN: Von Boxcars (desperately wanting to boast of surviving the rumble) backs away from the well-protected A13 in 10Q6. Sturm und Drac get into position to join the combat on Board 10 at last.

British Team - Turn 8-10

| AFV | Callsign | Player |
|-----|----------|--------|
|-----|----------|--------|

| | | |
|----------|------------|------------------------|
| A13 MkII | Sgt Fouler | Gordon McClelland (TL) |
|----------|------------|------------------------|

The Foulermobile

German Team - Turn 8-10

| AFV | Callsign | Player |
|--------|------------------|-----------------------|
| PzIIF | Fwbl Drac | Earl Schultz |
| Pz38tE | Gftr von Boxcars | David Bishop |
| PzIIIG | Lt Sturm | Mark McGilchrist (TL) |

TURN 8 *'The Shouting'*

BRITISH: Drac's PzII attracts Fouler's attention, a prime 2pdr target.._ Bang! Miss_. Bang! Possible Shock... Bang! Immobilised. Fouler curses fate, no PzII should survive three shots from a 40L.

GERMAN: The Germs fire back, missing the hull-down A13 mostly (and having no effect anyway). Then Drac becomes a statistic, (of the rumble that is, with he and his crew instantly barbecued).

URNS 9-10 *'It's All Over'*

Fearful Fouler fights on as the last man with the last rounds - and even whacks Sturm (proving it was fatal to become Team Leader of the Germans). Boxcars is still swinging but not landing them where it hurts.

The GM cries enough! Game Over!!

Those lucky Huns definitely got support from the Dice-Gods at the beginning, and the plucky/unlucky Brits had to play catch-up thereafter.

After 10 Turns, the Germans scored more CVP than the British side (who had one extra AFV), so it is an Iron Cross (2nd Class) for Boxcars, the lone German survivor. Sgt Fouler, out of fuel and ammo, goes into the bag (later becoming the black-market czar of Stalag VII, but mysteriously disappearing when the Red Army overran the camp in '45).

What was really surprising to me was the fact that in a situation where the Final To Kill # needed was usually around 6, that out of 15 tanks destroyed, 10 burned, and of the other 5 only one crew survived.

It was great fun to GM the rumble and observe the players grasping for control over the chaos (mostly denied them), and communication with each other (which occasionally happened). It was too bad that nobody tried parking beside a friendly AFV to talk directly, thus being able to give/get more information than Radio messages allowed.

Oh well, now I can go play in somebody else's Rumble. The End.

Is ASL Year 2000 Compliant?

So your asking yourself, how can cardboard and dice have a Y2K Compliance problem. Ha!, complacency like that is what made this problem in the first place.

So, I have conducted a rigorous testing programme to determine if all components are compliant, the rules, the counters, the boards and of course the dice. Masses of paper to show due diligence has been wasted..I mean, compiled. Thorough reports have been prepared, complete with lovely graphic displays of pie charts and coloured graphs.

However, in short, except for the little radio control microchips in Longworth's dice, ASL is fully Y2K compliant. ASL players can actually sit back and laugh as all the computer games die horrible deaths. When the power goes out, light up the candles and play on (careful with the wax on the boards).

However, although many of you may have not yet noticed, the first meeting date for the Bears next year is Saturday, January 1st, 2000. That's right folks, the BIG day for Y2K.

Initially I thought , so what, ASL is guaranteed Y2K compliant, even if the power is out, play will go on!!

However, how many of us will be at work that day, testing software and hardware, or on call for systems crashes. Many I suspect. Even worse, being New Year's Day, many of us will be suffering personal system failures due to alcohol abuse.

Perhaps the following Saturday, the 8th January, 2000 might be a more auspicious date.

Bear Ratings

POOR RATINGS RETURNS

Turning in Bear results has reached a new low, with only 25 results being handed in in the last 6 months.

What I suggest is that players that hand in no results in a 6 month period lose a number of points, say 10, or maybe 1%. This is act as an incentive to put in results, and also to reflect the inevitable loss of ASL skill that comes from not playing regularly.

Besides, I have to find means of clawing my way back into the top 10!.. *Editor*

NEXT ISSUE PEGASUS BRIDGE

To celebrate the 55th Anniversary of the Normandy D-Day Landings, we take a good close look at the Pegasus bridge landing, the scenarios and the campaign.